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News: Agnipath scheme

- The Supreme Court has recently dismissed petitions challenging the Delhi HC's judgement that upheld the Agnipath scheme for recruitment to the armed forces.

Agnipath Scheme

- Agnipath Scheme allows patriotic and motivated youth to serve in the Armed Forces for a period of four years.
- The youth joining the army will be called Agniveer.
- Under the new scheme, around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually.
- However, after four years, only 25% of the batch will be recruited back into their respective services, for a period of 15 years.

Objectives

- It is expected to bring down the average age profile of the Indian Armed Forces by about 4 to 5 years.
- The scheme envisions that the average age in the forces is 32 years today, which will go down to 26 in six to seven years.

Eligibility Criteria

- It is **only for personnel below officer ranks** (those who do not join the forces as commissioned officers).
- **Commissioned officers are the army's highest ranked officers.** They hold an exclusive rank in the Indian armed forces. They **often hold a commission under the president's sovereign power and are officially instructed to protect the country.**
- Aspirants **between the ages of 17.5 years and 23 years will be eligible** to apply.

Benefits for Agniveers

- Upon the completion of the 4-years of service, a one-time 'Seva Nidhi' package of **Rs 11.71 lakhs will be paid to the Agniveers that will include their accrued interest thereon.**
- They will **also get an Rs 48 lakh life insurance cover for the four years.**
- In **case of death, the payout will be over Rs 1 crore, including pay for the unserved tenure.**
- The **government will help rehabilitate soldiers who leave the services after four years.** They will be **provided with skill certificates and bridge courses.**